

Idaho Wolf Management Progress Report November 4 – November 21, 2008

NEW - Delisting Update:

On October 24, 2008 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it is reopening the public comment period on its proposal to delist the gray wolf in the northern Rocky Mountains. Through a notice in the Federal Register published on October 28, 2008, USFWS asked the public to provide comments and any additional information on the February 2007 proposal to delist wolves. The Service is seeking additional information on a variety of topics related to the delisting. More details are available in the Federal Register notice which will be posted along with associated materials at the Service's northern Rocky Mountains wolf website: <http://westerngraywolf.fws.gov>.

The public will have until November 28, 2008, to submit their comments to the Federal Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> or via U.S. mail or hand delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: RIN 1018-Au53; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

For the time being, all wolves to the north of Interstate- 90 in Idaho remain listed as endangered. All wolves in the southern half of Montana, all portions of Idaho south of Interstate-90, and all of Wyoming are being managed under the 2005 and 2008 Endangered Species Act nonessential experimental population 10j regulations. The State of Idaho Department of Fish and Game is acting as the designated agent for the USFWS in implementing day-to-day management of wolves under the MOU between the Secretary of Interior and Governor of Idaho signed January 2006.

Delisting wolves and assuring their proper long-term management is and has been of highest priority for the state of Idaho and the Fish and Game Department. We continue to work along with the Department of Interior, Department of Justice, and other states and interveners toward the eventual delisting of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains, and move toward state management under the State Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and the Wolf Population Management Plan.

You may review past wolf weekly publications on our wolf webpage and links along with all pertinent and updated wolf information and publications at:
<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

Monitoring

Aerial telemetry flights are ongoing. November and December are the primary months Idaho Fish and Game and the Nez Perce Tribe attempt to count wolf pack members from the air. Snow conditions and time of year when pack members tend to congregate allow us to get quality pack sizes from the air.

Management

From January 1 – November 21 agencies have documented 136 dead wolves in Idaho.

Of those, 86 were depredation control actions by USDA Wildlife Services, nine illegal kills, 13 legal kills, four natural kills, and 24 other or unknown.

From January 1 – November 24, Wildlife Services confirmed that wolves: killed 15 cows, 85 calves, 212 sheep, 13 dogs, 1 foal; injured 1 cow, 7 calves, 6 sheep, 7 dogs; probably killed: 6 cows, 22 calves, 57 sheep; and probably injured 1 cow, 3 calves, 1 sheep.

Table 1. Confirmed wolf depredations and wolf mortality in Idaho from 2003 to Nov 24, 2008.

| YEAR | Depredations ¹ | | | | Wolf Mortality | | | |
|-------|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------|-------|
| | Cattle | Sheep | Dogs | Total | WS ² | 10j ³ | Other | Total |
| 2003 | 7 | 130 | 3 | 140 | 7 | 0 | 8 | 15 |
| 2004 | 19 | 176 | 4 | 199 | 17 | 0 | 21 | 38 |
| 2005 | 29 | 166 | 12 | 207 | 24 | 3 | 16 | 43 |
| 2006 | 41 | 237 | 4 | 282 | 35 | 7 | 19 | 61 |
| 2007 | 57 | 211 | 10 | 278 | 43 | 7 | 27 | 77 |
| 2008 | 100 | 212 | 13 | 325 | 86 | 13 | 37 | 136 |
| Total | 243 | 1130 | 46 | 1419 | 212 | 30 | 128 | 370 |

¹ Includes confirmed depredations resulting in death or injury

² Authorized take by Wildlife Services

³ Authorized take under 10j or while delisted for protection of stock and dogs

Control

From November 4 to 24, WS confirmed 10 wolf depredations on livestock and another two probable wolf depredations. WS also confirmed that wolves killed four cows, five calves, a ewe and a foal, and probably killed a cow and a calf, all on private land. In response to those depredations, WS shot and killed four wolves. During the same time in 2007, WS verified two confirmed wolf depredations.

Research

University of Montana researchers Dave Ausband and Barbara Fannin recently finished deploying wolf hair snaring devices in western Montana and Idaho. Current efforts are focused solely on developing a technique to non-invasively collect hair samples from wolves and are not designed to provide any genetic insight about the population of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains.

From September through November they deployed rub pads baited with lure(s) in three wolf pack territories to induce rolling behavior from wolves and to obtain hair samples for DNA analyses. They collected 191 hair samples (sample=10 hairs) from 39 roll events. In November-December, Fannin will analyze the hair samples at Dr. Lisette Wait's lab in Moscow to determine whether they contain wolf DNA.

Information and Education

The Fish and Game Commission met November 6 and discussed timelines and management direction for the Idaho Fish and Game wolf program now and following the proposed delisting in mid January. A short video on these discussions can be viewed at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hv24KW6mu7k>

Information and updates, including the directives provided by the commission can be viewed at: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/cms/wildlife/wolves/>

A reminder: wolves are protected under the endangered species act and killing one illegally is a federal offense.

Please help us manage wolves by reporting wolf sightings on our Fish and Game observation form found at:

http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/apps/wolf_report/

Delisting: FWS – Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Status (WY, MT, ID): The U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, issued a preliminary injunction on Friday, July 18, 2008, that immediately reinstated temporary Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains pending final resolution of the case. This includes all of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and parts of north-central Utah. On September 22, the United States filed its motion to vacate the delisting rule, return the gray wolf to the list of endangered and threatened species, and remand the matter to the Fish and Wildlife Service. On October 14, Judge Molloy filed an order granting the United States' motion to remand the delisting rule back to the Fish and Wildlife Service. He also dismissed the lawsuit challenging the delisting rule.